The Role of Trials in Health: Insights from Madārij as-Sālikīn

(EART: *Estimated Average Reading Time*: 5 minutes)

Health, in its physical, emotional, and spiritual dimensions, holds a profound place in the Islamic tradition. Among the timeless wisdom found in the book *Madārij as-Sālikīn*, Imām Ibn al-Qayyim[1] {رَحِمَهُ ٱللَّهُ}[2] eloquently reflects on the interplay between divine trials and the blessings they carry. The concept of *ar-Riḍā* (contentment) is presented as an essential virtue, where the believer perceives Allāh's wisdom and mercy even in adversity. He says:

فَالرَّاضِي: هُوَ الَّذِي يَعُدُّ نِعَمَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ فِيمَا يَكْرَهُهُ، أَكْثَرَ وَأَعْظَمَ مِنْ نِعَمِهِ عَلَيْهِ فِيمَا يُحِبُّهُ

"*The satisfied individual (ar-Rāḍī) is the one who considers the blessings of Allāh upon him in what he dislikes to be greater and more numerous than His blessings upon him in what he loves.*"

This perspective fosters a transformative view of health challenges, aligning the believer's heart with divine decree (*Qadr*). Further underscoring this point, Imām Ibn al-Qayyim {رَحِمَهُ ٱللَّهُ} mentions that some of the earlier scholars reminded us of Allāh's intent behind illness:

وَلَا أَمْرَضَكَ إِلَّا لِيَشْفِيَكَ

"*And He did not cause you to become ill except to heal you.*"

This profound statement highlights that *Ibtilāʾāt* (trials), including *Maraḍ* (illness), are vehicles for *Taṣfīyah* (purification), *Taṭawwur* (growth), and *Shifāʾ* (healing) in the physical, spiritual, and eternal sense. Such *Baṣāʾir* (insights) not only inspire *Ṣabr* (patience) and *Shukr* (gratitude) but also emphasize that *Tamām al-ʿĀfiyah* (well-being, encompassing safety, health, security, and protection from all harm) stems from *Ulfah* (harmony) between the *Jism* (body), *ʿAql* (mind), and *Nafs* (inner-

self) under the guidance of divine wisdom of Allāh. These reflections, found on page 208 of *Madārij as-Sālikīn* (third edition, 1416H/1996 CE), edited by Moḥammad al-Muʿtaṣim Billāh al-Baghdādī and published by Dār al-Kitāb al-ʿArabī, offer invaluable guidance for those seeking a deeper understanding of health through an Islamic lens.

Wallāhu Al-Muwaffiq (And Allāh is the One Who Grants Success).

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[1] Imām Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawzīyah (691H/751H — 1292/1350) was a legendary Shaykh and also the student of another great scholar, Imām Ibn Taymīyah. He is known by the name Ibn Qayyim al-Jawzīyah because his father was the director of the school al-Jawzīyah in Damascus. He grew up in a pious and intellectual environment. Among his objectives were to return to the correct interpretation of Islam and to purify it from *Bidaʿ* (innovations) and *Khurāfāt* (superstitions). His books, as well as those of his Shaykh (Ibn Taymīyah), are strongly recommended for study to this day due to the profound knowledge they contain and because the two Imāms excelled in forming positions based on the most authentic *Adillah* (evidences).

[2] {رَحِمَهُ ٱللَّهُ}

Transcribed as *Raḥimahullāh*, this is typically a *Duʿāʾ* (supplication) that is written or recited after mentioning the name of a deceased Muslim. In terms of meaning, translators often render it as "*May Allāh have mercy on him*."

[3] *Rajab*: The seventh month of the Islamic lunar calendar. In Islām, four months are considered sacred (*al-Ashhur al-Ḥurum*). These are:
- *Muḥarram* – The first month of the Islamic lunar calendar.
- *Rajab* – The seventh month.
- *Dhūl Qiʿdah* – The eleventh month.
- *Dhūl Ḥijjah* – The twelfth month.

[4] The "'H'" (in Arabic: ʿهـ) is an abbreviation for هِجْرَة (*Hijrah*/Emigration). It refers to the year in which the Prophet ﷺ emigrated to Medina (tr. *al-Madīnah an-Nabawīyah*). As Muslims, we adhere to our own calendar whenever possible, known in Arabic as التَّقْوِيمُ الْهِجْرِيُّ (transliterated as *at-Taqwīm al-Hijrī*).